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J. Porter Shaw Library



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News & Letter

OF THE SAN FRANCISCO MARITIME MUSEUM

OCTOBER 1969

Issue No. 1

Library is Loaned

Invaluable Research Collection

A priceless record of ship arrivals and departures in San Francisco Bay from 1886 to 1957 has been added to the Museum's library. The collection is on extended loan from the San Francisco Marine Exchange. These records have never been available to the public, and one stipulation of the loan to which our librarian, Al Harmon, agreed most happily was that the collection be used by students of maritime history.

Meeting this requirement has generated some interesting problems for the Museum staff. As always, our serious problem is storage in accessible locations. Furthermore, the storage space for these volumes had to be convenient to the library which is on the second floor. The collection contains extensive card files as well as 107 volumes of various sizes (some of the largest volumes measure 23 inches high by 18 inches deep). Revision of one of our storage rooms, including painting and lighting and shelving the collection is being undertaken by Jane Bradford, Curatorial Assistant. Housing plans are progressing, and the Museum hopes to welcome public perusal of these records soon.

Precise details and extent of coverage are extraordinary in these Marine Exchange records. Arrival information includes
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U. S. Navy Ships:

Two Points of View

An unusual gift to the Museum and a member's interest in a particular aspect of philately has provided the Museum with an unusual display.

Mr. Edward J. Wesley of San Diego recently presented the Museum with three cases of recognition models. These are well-detailed miniatures of both Allied and enemy vessels that were supplied to personnel of the Allied Navies and Air Forces during World War II. They were used in training recognition of both U.S. and enemy ships from various angles and at a distance. Mr. Don McPherson of Corte Madera, who has for two years maintained for us a philatelic display of U.S. Naval and other ship covers, has provided covers mailed from the actual vessels.

The miniatures, which measure at most 3 inches long, represent all major vessels, either individually or by a model of the class.

Each U. S. ship model is juxtaposed with a cover mailed from it, thus providing a unique focus on this period in United States Naval history.

—A. M.



Local Ship Modelers

Have a Case

The ancient craft of making model ships is still ardently pursued these days by a select few who have the ability and patience to reproduce accurately in small scale the complex structure and myriad detail of a great sailing ship. We have long wanted to provide local ship modelers with an opportunity to exhibit their work as an encouragement to this ancient craft, and as a complement to the Museum's outstanding collection of models.

This will become a reality shortly when a case especially for the display of contemporary local work will be installed on the second floor of the Museum. The first display will trace the development of the hull in making a model, and will include three hulls in progressive stages of development: the solid frames and backbone of the brig SWIFT of 1783, made by Bill Fenerin; a merchant ship of 1799, solid blocks being shaped in frames, also by Mr. Fenerin; and the planked hull of the three-masted schooner ATLANTIC, made by George Karitianos.

We plan to change these exhibits every two months, and hope that competent model makers in the area will want to participate in creating the displays.

The first display has been arranged by model-maker George Karitianos of Daly City.

—A. H.

Notes on Recent Books:

LOUISE by Otis Oldfield, introduction by Karl Kortum (or, fully titled, "A Pictorial Journal of a Voyage from San Francisco Bay to Dutch Harbor, Alaska, Aboard the Three-Masted Schooner LOUISE, Last of the Sailing Vessels out of San Francisco to Engage in the Bering Sea Codfishery, as Recorded in 1931 by the Artist Otis Oldfield with 20 Pictures of Life at Sea Under Sail, and with an Historical Introduction by Karl Kortum, Director of the San Francisco Maritime Museum"), San Francisco, Grabhorn-Hoyem, 1969, 400 copies in the edition, \$75.

Otis Oldfield, a painter who for some years taught at the San Francisco Art Institute and at the College of Arts and Crafts in Oakland, did not live to see the publication of this beautiful book, though he saw proofs of the reproductions of his paintings and was certainly well satisfied with them. Of the more than 100 paintings he did aboard the LOUISE, 19 of them are reproduced in color. Together with his journal these form an invaluable and certainly unique record of life in a commercial sailing vessel in fairly recent times.

As for the physical aspect of the book, every detail of it speaks of the unmatched art and craft of the Grabhorn-Hoyem Press of San Francisco.

This book is available at the Museum sales counters; the usual discount applies to purchases by members.

—A. M.



(Continued from page 1)

hour, date, vessel's name, nation, class, tonnage, master, days of voyage, from what port, consignee and what pier the vessel docked at. Departure information covers sailing hour, date, the vessel's name, nation, class, tonnage, master, destination and consignee. In some years cargo and weather observation are noted. Arrivals and departures from April 1904 through August 1927 are alphabetically indexed in separate volumes. Mishaps and disasters are treated in separate records. Entries include date, vessel name and a short account of what happened. For example: "December 15, 1937 JULIA LUCKENBACH stmr collided with stmr CASPAR in the Oakland Estuary. Former proceeded on voyage, latter had her bow badly damaged and four seamen injured."

The addition of these remarkable records add immeasurably to our library resources and will be of invaluable assistance to researchers.

— J. B.

About the News Letter . . .

A third of a million people visit the San Francisco Maritime Museum each year. For many of them it offers a satisfaction of a mild curiosity, a sight to see; for others, a deeper experience, a broadening of knowledge and an awakening of interest in San Francisco's maritime past.

For a relatively few it has meant a commitment to share in the work we are doing of preserving and displaying that maritime heritage. These are the people who have become members and who year after year support this work.

Many of them live far away from the museum and can enjoy their membership privileges only on vacations or business

Members' Meeting:

Slide Show and Films

"To Bristol Bay and the Bering Sea with the Great Star Fleet" is the title of a slide show that will be given for Museum members on Thursday, November 20 at 7:30 p. m. at the Museum. The show is made up of slides of photographs taken by member Axel Widerstrom in 1919, 1920 and 1921 on voyages on the Alaska Packers' STAR OF HOLLAND and STAR OF FRANCE. These are augmented by photographs loaned by Captain Harold Huycke, and ones from the Museum's own collection. Mr. Widerstrom and Captain Huycke, a maritime historian, will comment on the slides.

As time allows, two films will also be shown. Both are from the Del Monte film library, and afford a rare chance to see the Alaska Packers in motion—the sailing fleet departing San Francisco Bay for the fisheries, and fishing from dories in Alaska.

All members and their friends are invited to enjoy this program. Refreshments will be served following the program.

Sarah Nome
Registrar

trips to this city. This bi-monthly News Letter is now inaugurated to keep our members informed of news of the Museum, and as a grateful acknowledgment of their continued support.

—A. H.

NEWS LETTER

*of the San Francisco Maritime Museum
Albert W. Gatov, President
Karl Kortum, Director*

*The Museum is open free of charge daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
The Museum's ship BALCLUTHA, a three-masted square-rigger
moored at Pier 43, is open from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. daily.
There is an admission charge at BALCLUTHA.*

*News Letter is sent to all members of the Maritime Museum, a
private, nonprofit historical society. The Museum is supported
almost entirely by its ship BALCLUTHA and by its members.
Interested non-members are cordially invited to join the Museum
in support of its program of the preservation and display of
Pacific Coast maritime history.*

A. Mozley, Editor

SAN FRANCISCO MARITIME MUSEUM

At the Foot of Polk Street, San Francisco 94109

Non-Profit
Organization

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